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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6065
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7532
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1237
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1460
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 0332
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0680
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0896
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6176
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 1851
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3263
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0804
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1614
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1494
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 2302
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0675
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6224
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR 0131
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0192
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 4900
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7821
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0171
RHMMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHMMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0180
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 000684

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - PARA CLASSIFICATION AND NUMBER CHANGE

DEPT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2018
TAGS: PGOV PREL PARM PM CH IN
SUBJECT: INDIA ANALYZES DOD REPORT ON CHINA

REF: SECSTATE 28316

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Les Vigerie for reasons 1.4
(B,D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Indian Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary for East Asia Vijay K. Gokhale received the Annual Report to Congress on Military Power of the People's Republic of China (Reftel) with clear interest. He expressed concern about China's opacity in terms of its budget and its intentions, pressing for the U.S. and other interested countries to get answers from China, as India's own dialogue with China forms an incomplete picture. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Acting PolCouns and DATT on March 31 met with Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary (East Asia) Vijay K. Gokhale to deliver reftel talking points. Gokhale accepted a copy of the unclassified version of the Annual Report to Congress on Military Power of the People's Republic of China. Gokhale noted that force accretion is inevitable for a rising power, but asked if China has the ability to deploy such force. He commented that China always appears to downplay its military abilities, while the international community exaggerates them. Capacity is a critical issue, but he suggested that the urgent question for India is, what are China's intentions?

¶3. (C) Gokhale pointed out that the GOI shares U.S. views

about the opaque Chinese budget. India's focus is on how China uses its equipment rather than how it spends. Gokhale underlined that China's counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden are legitimate and show China's capacity to deploy. He asked if the U.S. has examined whether there is any reason to believe that such legitimate actions would eventually put China into a position where it would be able to adopt a more threatening posture towards India. China is seeking to establish an increasing number of bases in Africa, he noted, and the reasons for this are not clearly stated by Beijing. He maintained that if China believes its White Paper statement that "the periphery is peaceful," and if it has adequate force to eviscerate Taiwan, yet it does not have the capacity to target the U.S., then there is a contradiction between the White Paper and China's acquisitions that must be examined. EmbOffs inquired about the dialogue between India and China on such matters. Gokhale relayed that there is a dialogue track, but it forms an incomplete picture. Even official military delegations don't get the same access in China as they are granted in India. The Chinese troops "have a good political education and don't talk," said Gokhale. The opportunities are too few and too small.

¶4. (C) Gokhale stated that China has created an impression of power, and it is not clear to him how the U.S. administration will proceed with China: he contended that the media has given the impression of a shift within the U.S. administration towards greater accommodation of China. He cited the American reaction to the USS Impeccable incident in March 2009 as showing a "disconnect," and creating the impression that the U.S. feels the need to accommodate the Chinese. "It looks like the U.S. is adjusting to a new reality," said Gokhale, adding that the U.S. response to the Impeccable fed into China's efforts to create an impression of power that might be used to coerce other nations. DATT responded that the U.S. believes in open skies and open seas, but China does not feel the same: the USS Impeccable was in international waters and within the law.

¶6. (C) DATT noted that the U.S. Department of Defense is organizing a classified China expert exchange and requested that the Joint Secretary reach out if the GOI is interested in participating. Acting PolCouns emphasized that last year's quiet consultations on China between the U.S. and India were fruitful, and underlined that the U.S. is open to further dialogue.

BURLEIGH